

**United States House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security
Subcommittee on Management, Investigations and Oversight
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Chairman Carney, Ranking Member Bilirakis, members of the Subcommittee, I am Ray Dempsey, Vice President for Strategy & Portfolio for BP America. I am pleased to appear today before this Subcommittee to discuss information sharing practices related to the oil spill response efforts.

I have worked for BP for twenty years. On May 6, 2010, I joined the St. Petersburg Unified Command, which directs spill response efforts for the west coast of Florida and works together with incident command centers throughout the Gulf region, as a senior BP official. As part of my responsibilities, I also oversaw the St. Petersburg Joint Information Center, where BP worked with the Coast Guard and other federal and state government representatives to share information on spill-related efforts. The St. Petersburg Incident Command Post is now a branch of the Miami-based Florida Peninsula Command Post, which I joined in early June. While I am directly responsible for supporting BP's response efforts in Florida, I also work closely with my colleagues across the Gulf region and have spent time along the Gulf Coast as we stand united in this unprecedented response effort.

There is an enormous team working on the response efforts, with over 47,000 personnel deployed throughout the Gulf region. In my role, I focus on information sharing within the Unified Area Command generally, and the Florida Peninsula Command Post more specifically.

We are devastated by this horrendous accident. This incident has profoundly touched all of us, and we are all committed to doing the right thing for the people affected by this spill. Even as we absorb the human dimensions of this tragedy, we are committed to doing everything possible to minimize the environmental and economic

¹ The data described throughout this testimony is accurate to the best of my knowledge as of Friday, July 9, 2010, when this testimony was prepared. The information that we have continues to develop as our response to the incident continues.

impacts of the oil spill on the Gulf Coast. I volunteered for my current assignment because I want to help the company respond to this spill and to address the needs of the people in the Gulf Coast region.

The Unified Area Command Structure

Overall region-wide spill response efforts are led by the Unified Area Command (“UAC”). Retired Coast Guard Admiral Thad Allen is the National Incident Commander with ultimate responsibility for the overall response effort, and Coast Guard Admiral James Watson is the Federal On-Scene Coordinator. The UAC, currently based in New Orleans, Louisiana, includes personnel from BP and Transocean, the Coast Guard, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (“BOE”), and other federal entities such as the Departments of Homeland Security (“DHS”), Energy, and Defense, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (“NOAA”), the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (“USFWS”), the National Marine Fisheries Service (“NMFS”), the Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (“OSHA”), and the affected States.

To support the UAC, Incident Command Posts (“ICPs”) have been established in Mobile, Alabama; Houma, Louisiana; and Miami, Florida. The ICPs facilitate direct communication with state, city, parish, tribal, and county officials and direct a significant portion of the near-shore and on-shore response efforts. BP personnel play key roles in supporting the ICPs, along with personnel from the Coast Guard and DHS and other federal and state personnel. Twenty branch locations (nine serve under the Houma ICP, nine under the Mobile ICP, and 2 under the Miami ICP) serve as Forward Operating Bases to help protect the shoreline and provide locations for efficient storage and deployment of the equipment, materials, and personnel needed for this response. Local government personnel engage with the BP and US Coast Guard personnel at these branches. In addition, the BP Command Center based in Houston, which focuses on source control, also supports the UAC.

Importantly, all subsea, surface, and shoreline response efforts are coordinated through, and must ultimately be approved by, the UAC. The response currently involves approximately 47,000 personnel, 6,670 vessels and 118 aircraft. As a result of these efforts, approximately 740,000 barrels of oil have been collected or flared by available containment systems and approximately 3 million feet of boom has been deployed. These actions have all been carried out under the direction of the UAC.

BP's Role in the UAC

BP has committed tremendous global resources to the response effort. Our efforts are focused on two goals: stopping the flow of oil and minimizing the environmental and economic impacts from the spill. Towards this end, BP is deploying resources to fight the spill at the subsea, surface and shoreline.

For example, immediately following the explosion, in coordination with the Unified Command, BP activated its pre-approved spill response plan and began mobilizing oil spill response resources including skimmers, storage barges, tugs, aircraft, dispersant, and open-water and near shore boom. Today, BP carries out these activities through the ICPs. Currently, the Houma ICP directs offshore and near-shore skimming, dispersants and controlled burn efforts. The nine branches serving under the Houma ICP direct the tactical response for near-shore skimming, marsh and beach clean up activities. Similarly, the Mobile ICP and its branch locations direct near shore, marsh and beach activities for their area of responsibility. The UAC provides high-level strategic oversight of all ICP activities.

In addition, all source control procedures and activities undertaken by BP's Houston command center are approved through the UAC prior to execution.

Information Sharing within the Unified Area Command

As a senior BP official in the Florida Unified Command, I have spent substantial time working with government officials at all levels to address concerns, to discuss requests and recommendations, and ultimately to take the appropriate actions to meet

our responsibilities in the Gulf region. This is a key responsibility of the UAC – timely, accurate information sharing is both critical to the success of our operations and our obligations to the governments, businesses, and individuals in the Gulf who have been affected by this spill. Our information sharing expectations and objectives can be summarized simply: Ensure timely, accurate updates to the public; ensure close alignment of communications within the UAC to facilitate effective operations; and effectively liaison with local officials, the private sector and non-governmental groups to address concerns and ensure that recommendations are fully considered and implemented as appropriate. To successfully meet our goals, we have developed a number of formal and informal channels of communication.

First, the UAC holds regularly scheduled meetings to facilitate timely information sharing among UAC members. Under the Incident Command System (“ICS”), the UAC must hold regular situation updates, briefings and meetings. For example, daily situation briefings are held twice each day. They are attended by section heads, including BP and the Coast Guard (although any member of the UAC is able to attend), and led by the planning section chief, as prescribed by ICS.

The UAC also holds daily area command briefings, which include personnel from BP, the Coast Guard and government agencies, including federal and state officials. Participants receive briefings from the ICPs, discuss requests, and receive updates on weather, oil movement, and status of operations.

Second, in addition to the formal briefings, the ICPs communicate with the UAC multiple times throughout the day. The ICPs were established to ensure more direct access to and communication with local officials, businesses, and residents. Decisions and recommendations made in the ICPs are communicated up through ordinary command and through government and BP channels. Moreover, IPCs continually seek input from localities, consider seriously any concerns and issues raised, and do our best to address them accordingly. As a result, our operations and information sharing practices are constantly evolving. As a result, our operations and information-sharing practices are constantly evolving. For example, we just recently enhanced our Florida unified command structure to include additional branch locations in the Panhandle

region. This is intended to bring an enhanced level of command and control that includes representatives of local government. Local government best understands the needs of their communities, and we are striving better to integrate them into response efforts.

Third, BP, both within the context of the UAC and as a responsible party, communicates directly with federal and state government officials. BP regularly responds to information requests from key federal and state entities, such as OSHA, the Department of the Interior, and the Department of Energy. Moreover, federal government personnel, including the Coast Guard, have been a continuous presence at the BP Houston command center. Through these activities, BP seeks to ensure up-to-the-minute information-sharing with key federal and state personnel.

Finally, the UAC's external communications are largely handled by DHS's Emergency Support Function ("ESF") #15. ESF #15 has external affairs staff (led by the Coast Guard), including the Joint Information Center, which is staffed by representatives from BP, the Coast Guard, the Department of Defense and federal agencies (*e.g.*, EPA, NOAA, USFWS), and which is responsible for responding to media inquiries. There is also a governmental affairs team composed of liaison officers who provide information to and coordinate visits from elected officials and other interested parties. The community affairs team, composed of community liaisons, coordinates with BP and DHS community representatives working at the ICPs and branches. Community liaisons are responsible for working with affected members of the public and local officials in the affected areas and elevating issues to the UAC when necessary.

Conclusion

We believe the UAC structure in place has been largely effective. With any undertaking of this size and complexity, there is always room for improvement. We are committed to making these improvements every day.

BP is under no illusions about the seriousness of the situation we face. The world is watching us. President Obama and members of his Cabinet have visited the Gulf region and made clear their expectations of BP and our industry. So have governors and local officials, members of Congress, and the American people.

We know that we will be judged by our response to this crisis. I can assure you that my colleagues at BP and I are fully committed to ensuring that we do the right thing. We are mounting the largest spill response effort in history. The complexities are unprecedented. We and the entire industry will learn from this terrible event, and emerge from it stronger, smarter and safer.